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(54) **SPIRAL MAGNETIC FIELD APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PIPELINE INSPECTION**

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(60) Provisional application No. 61/113,692, filed on Nov. 12, 2008.

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G01N 27/72 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **324/220**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** **324/220**
See application file for complete search history.

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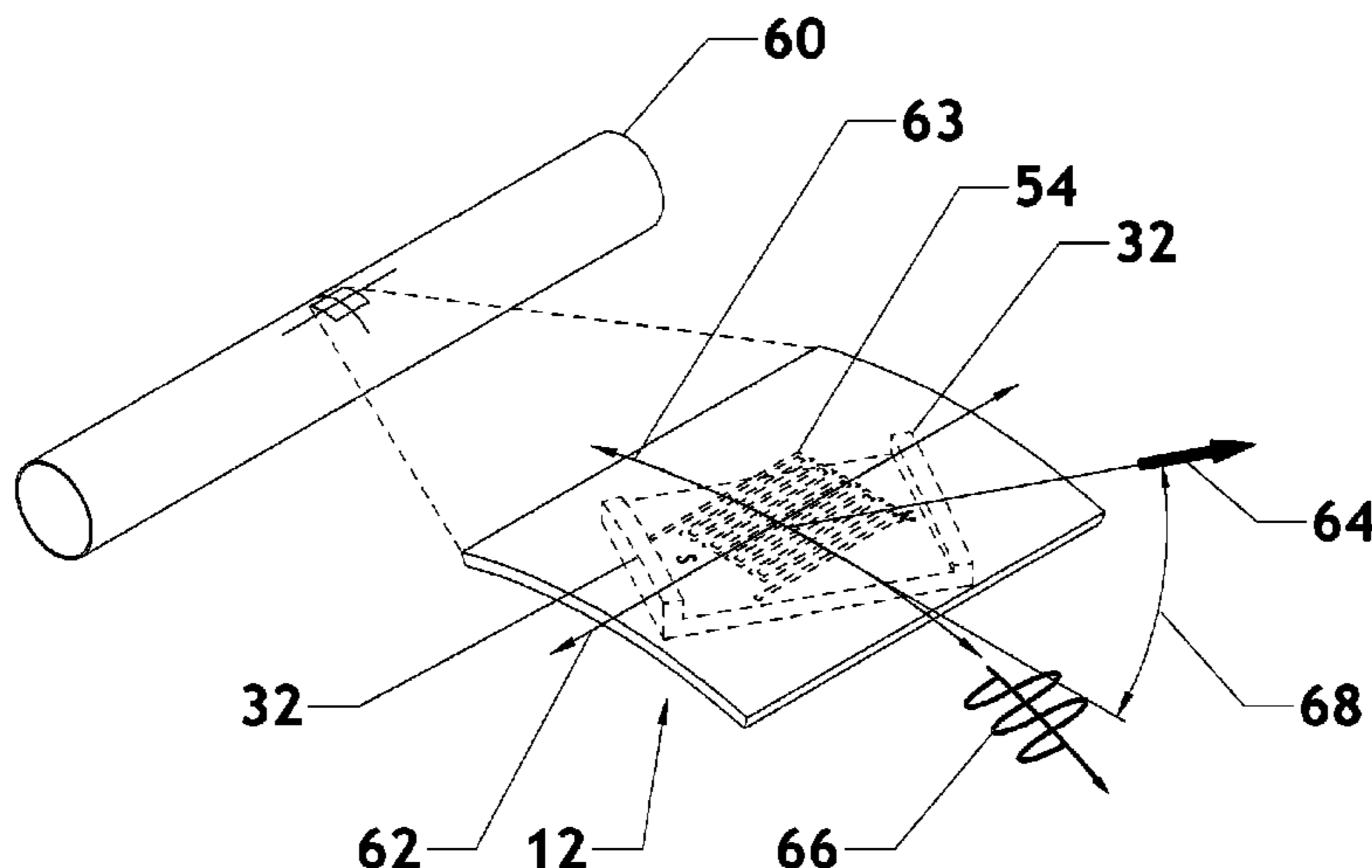
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system and method are disclosed for inspecting the wall of a pipeline while traveling therethrough. The system may comprise a portion of pipe comprising a pipe wall forming a cylindrical tube defining a circumferential direction and an axial direction. The system may further include an in-line inspection tool positioned within the portion of pipe. The in-line inspection tool may include a frame extending in the axial direction and at least one magnet connected to the frame and positioned to generate a magnetic field. The magnetic field may be orientated obliquely with respect to the circumferential and axial directions of the pipeline. The inspection tool may include a transmitter connected to the frame to generate an inspection signal within the magnetic field.

20 Claims, 10 Drawing Sheets



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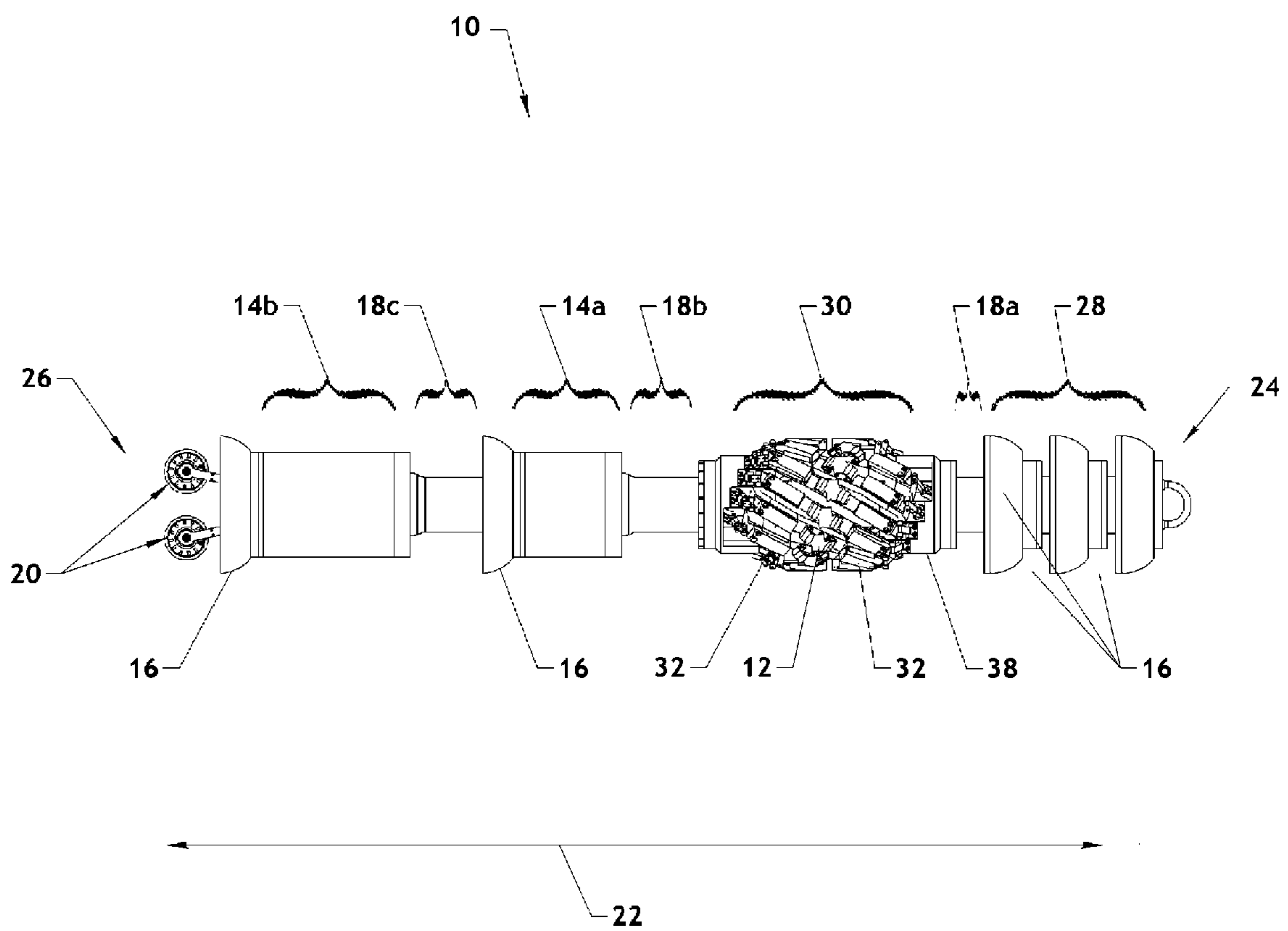


Figure 1

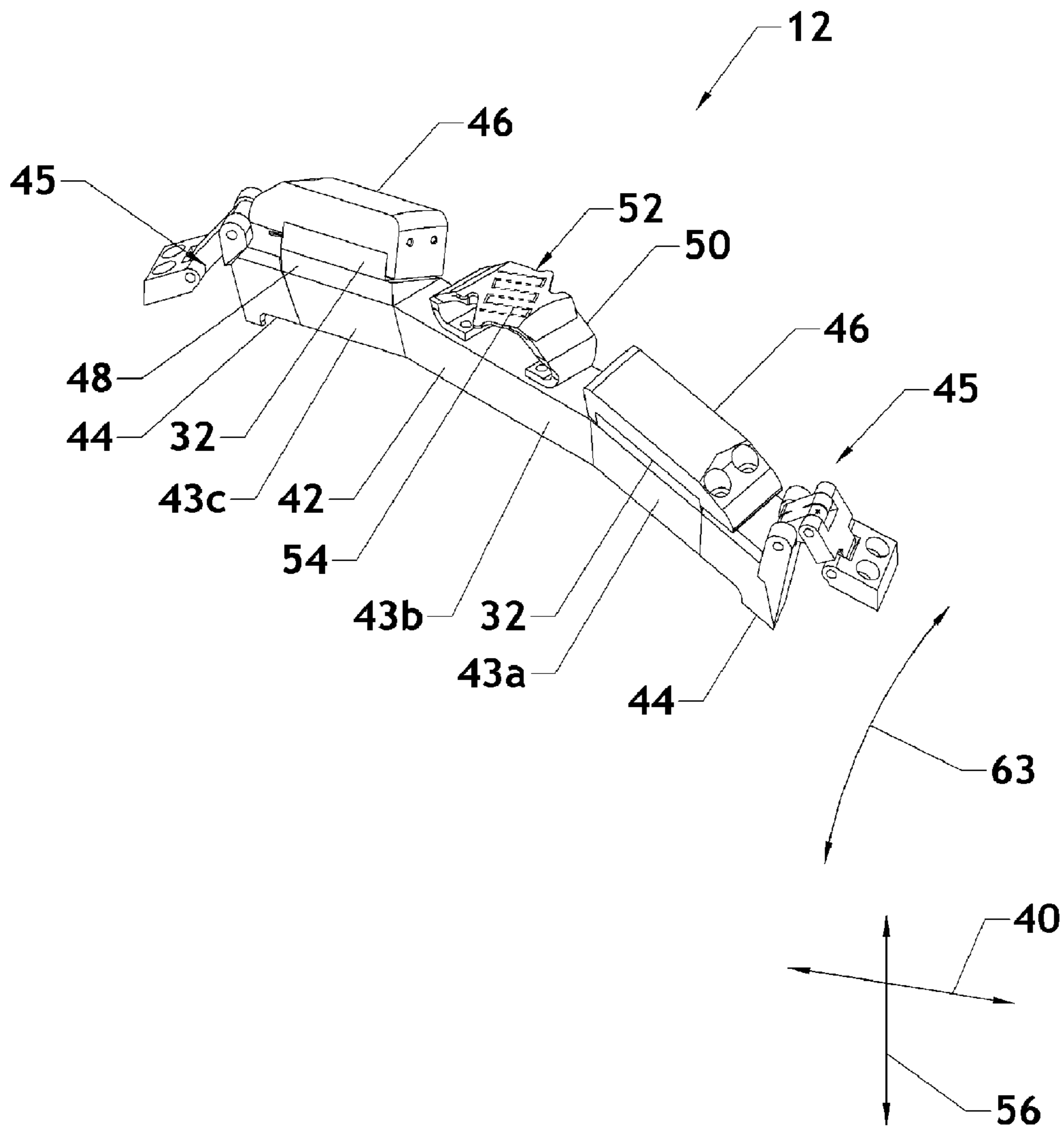


Figure 2

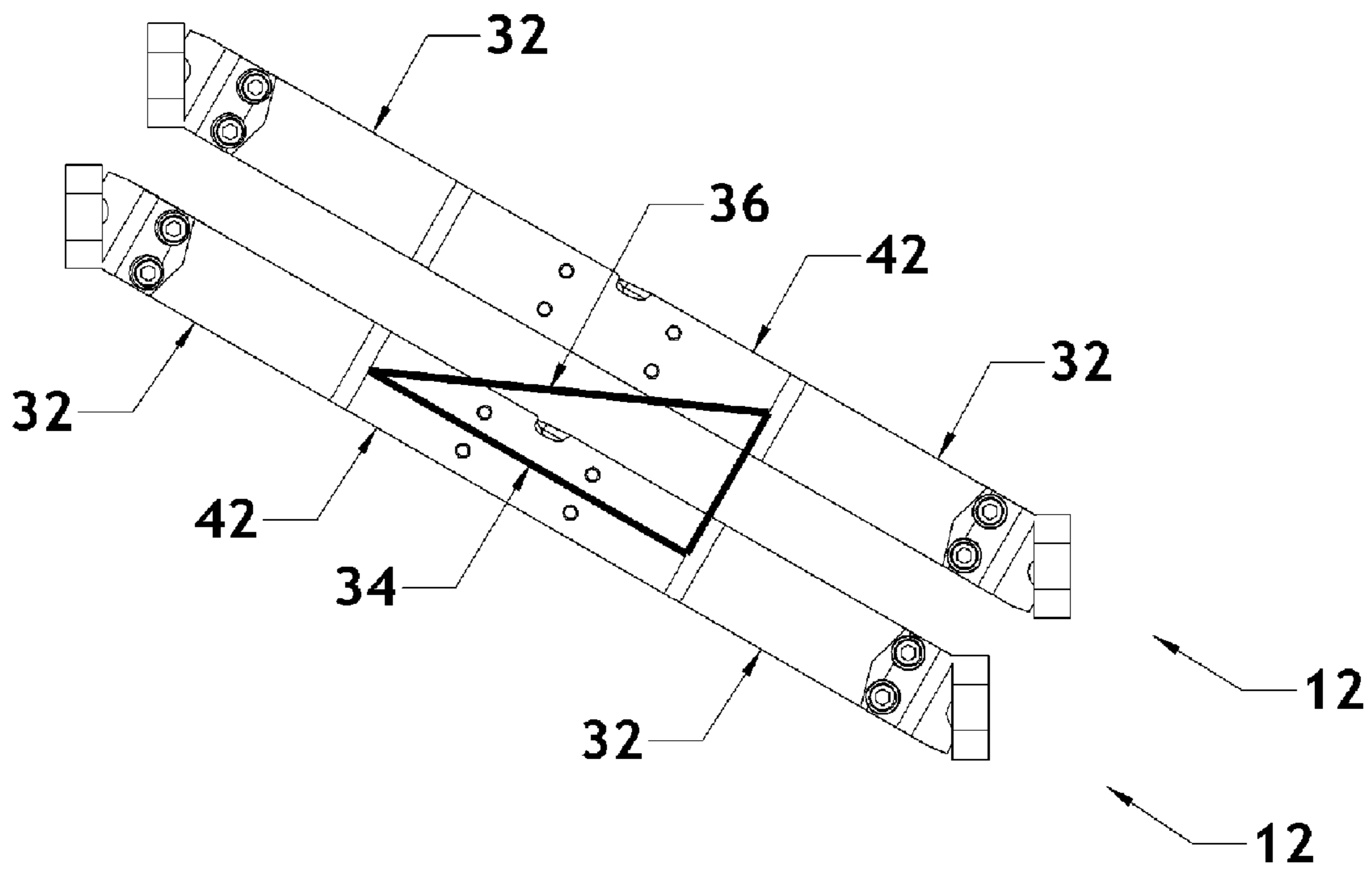


Figure 3

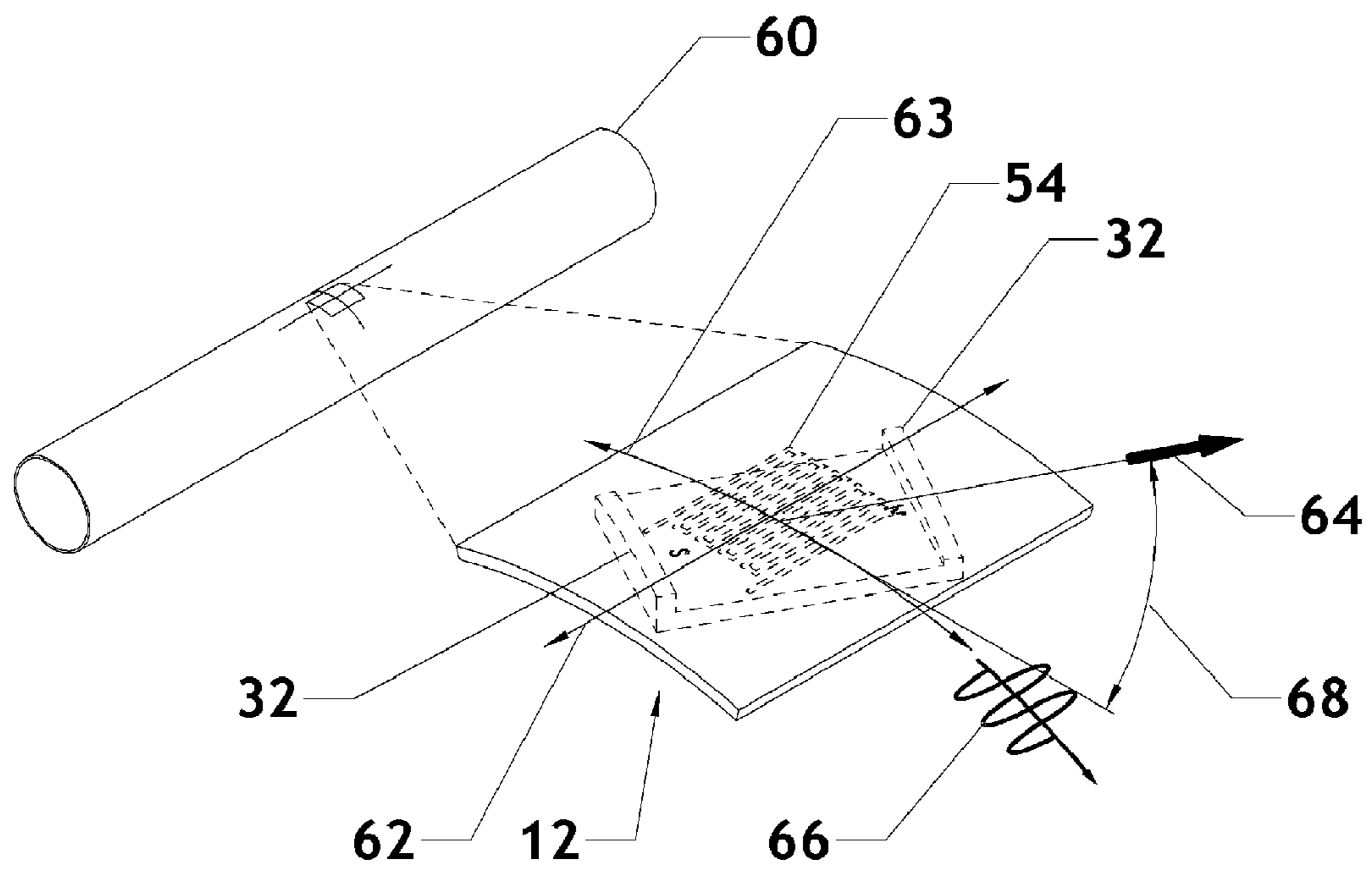


Figure 4

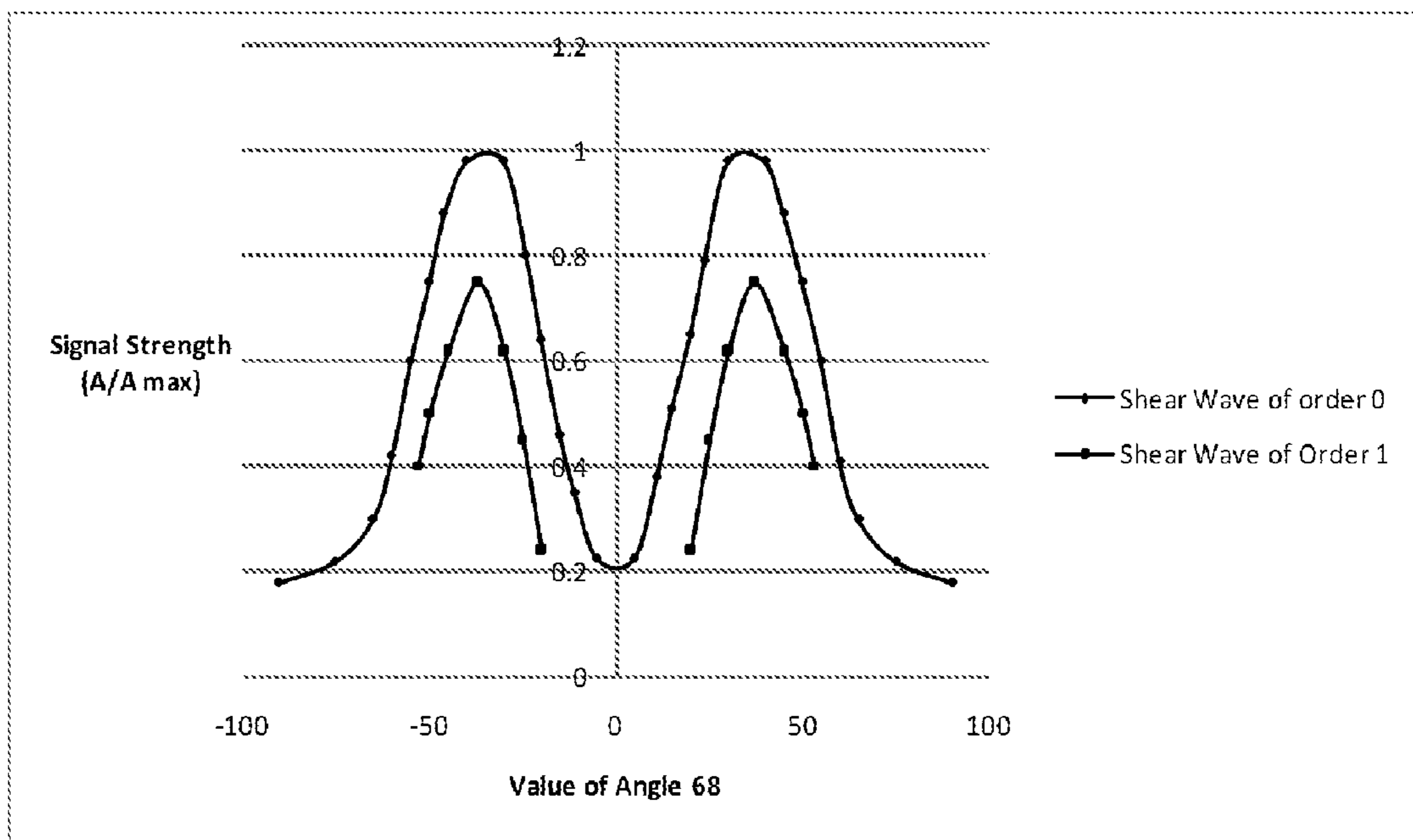


Figure 5

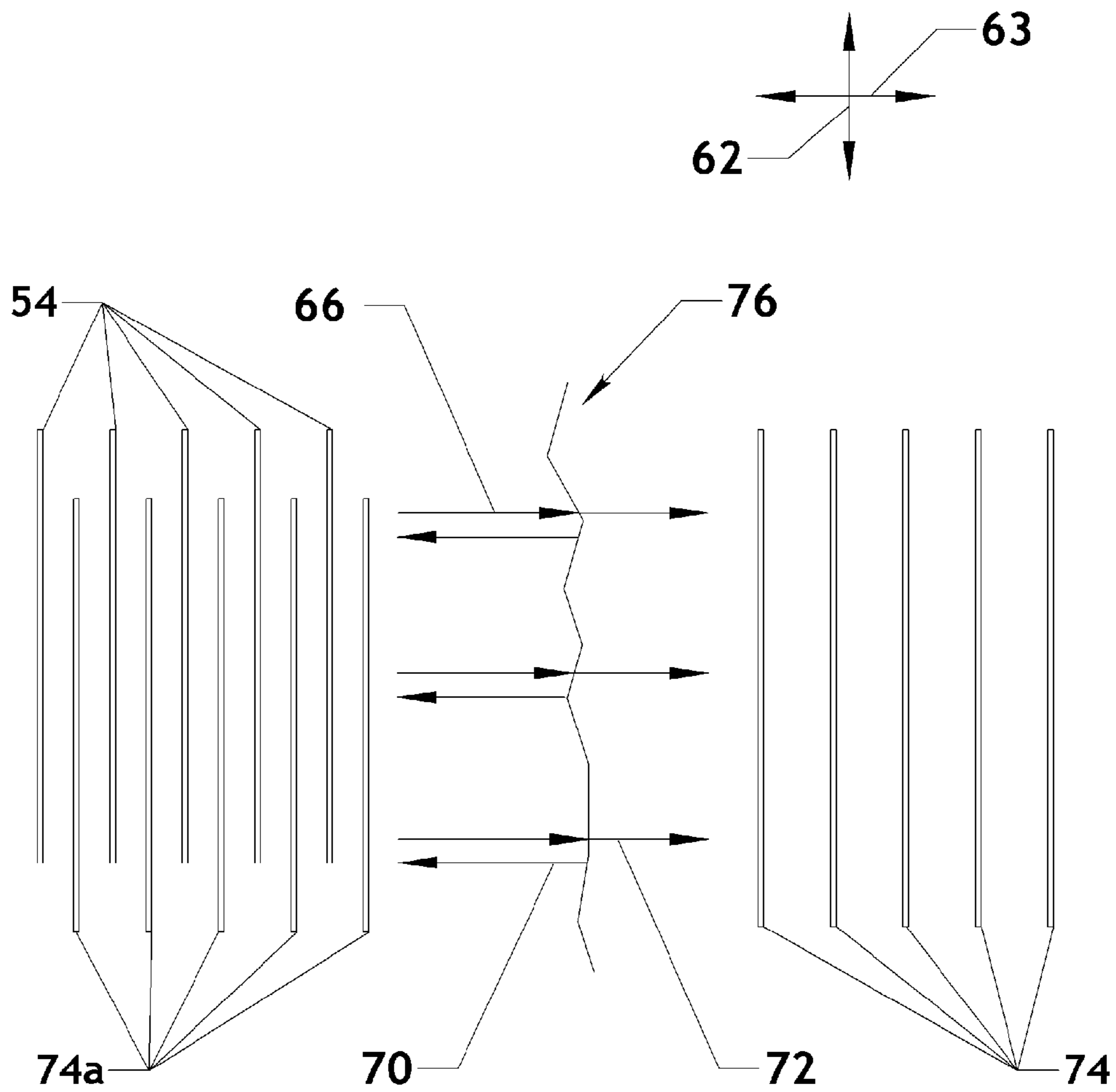


Figure 6

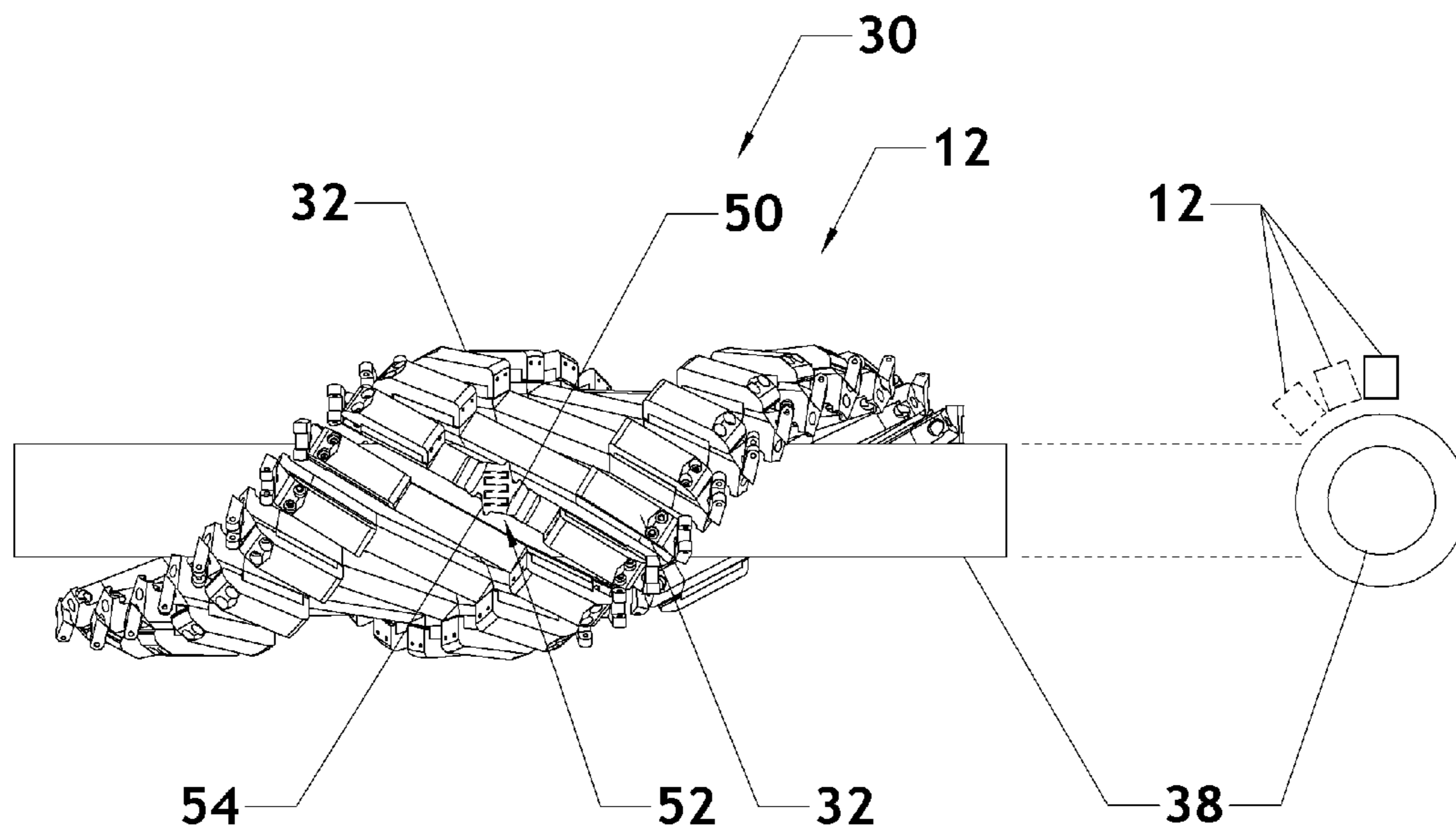


Figure 7

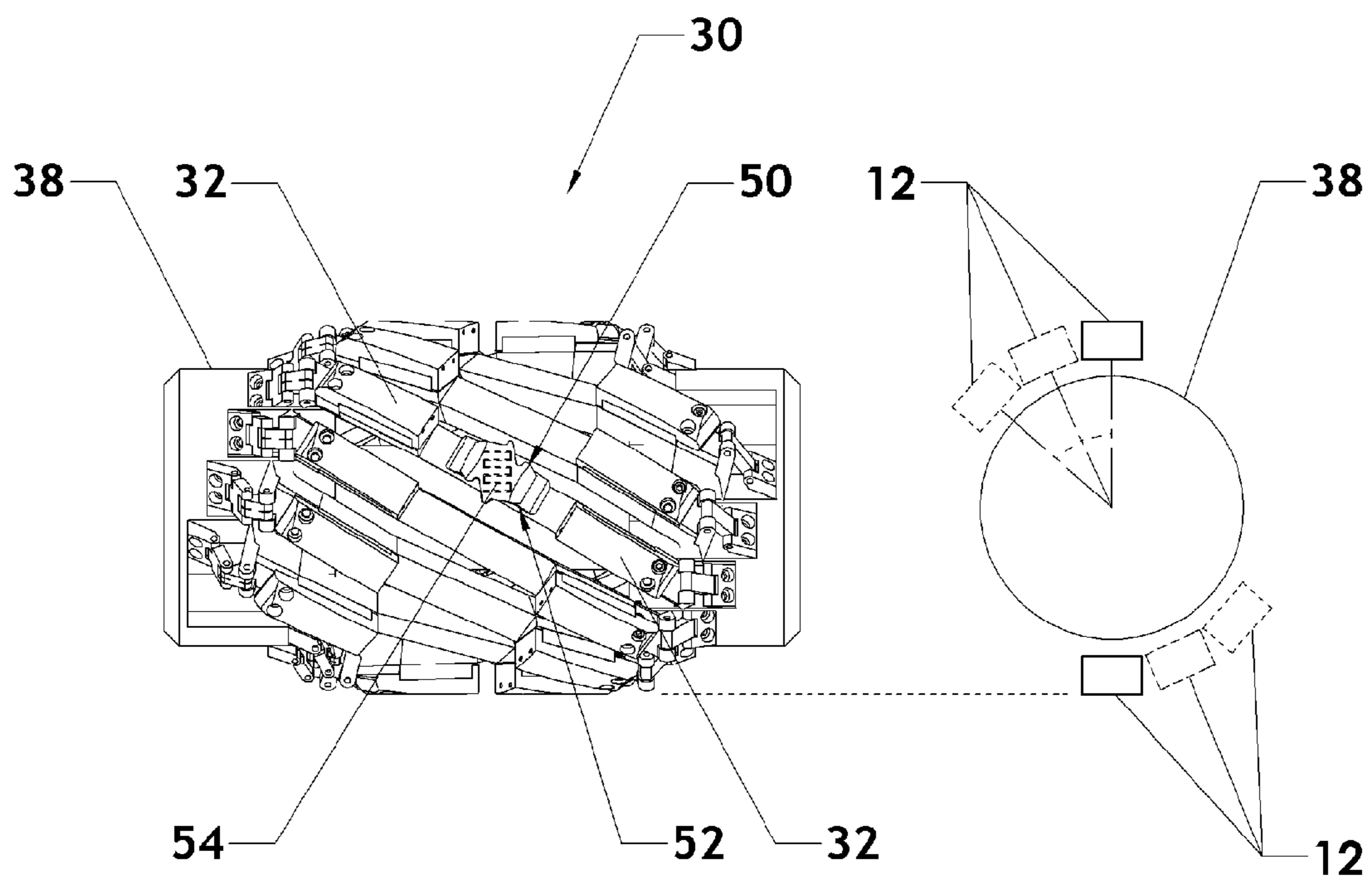


Figure 8

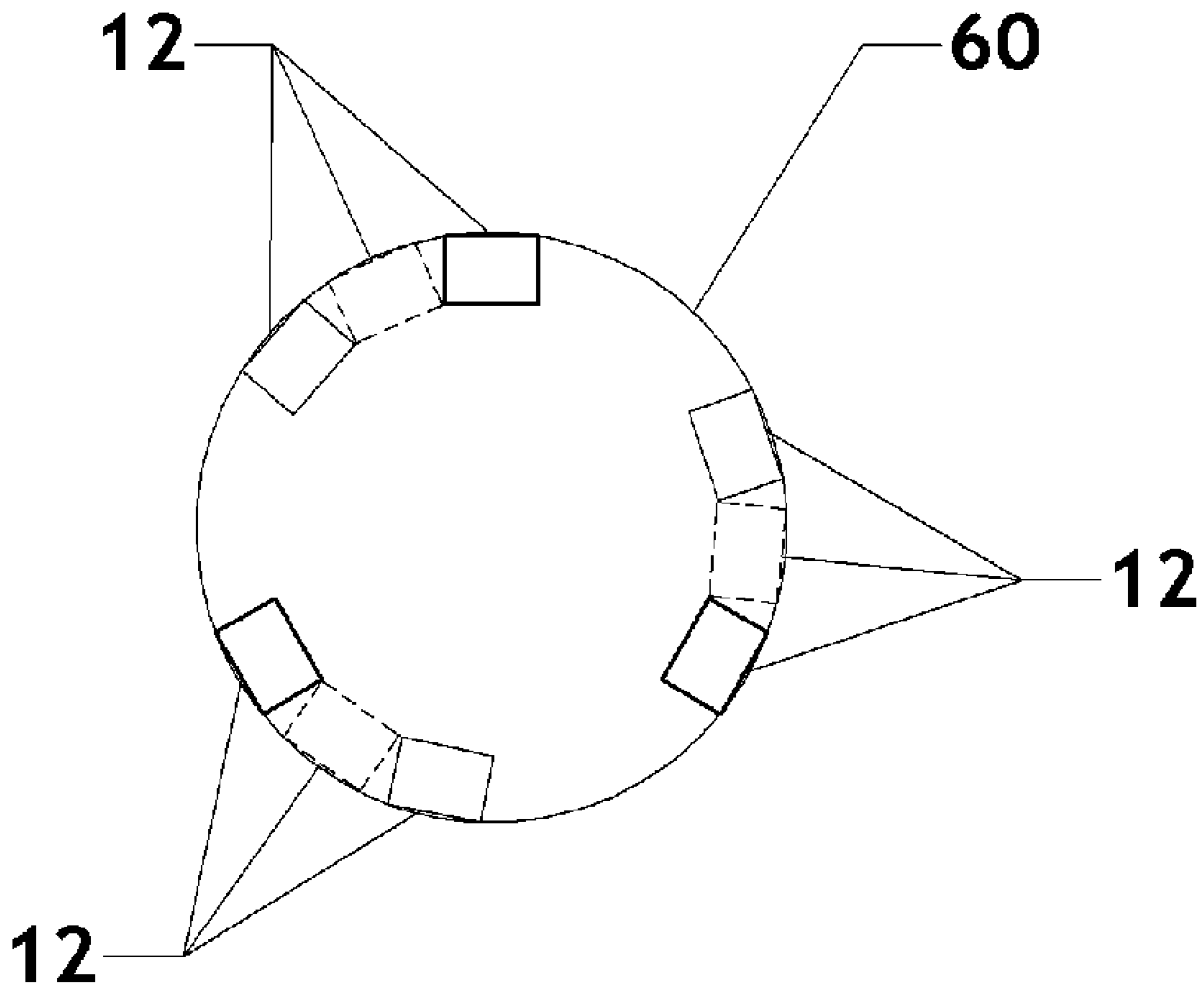


Figure 9

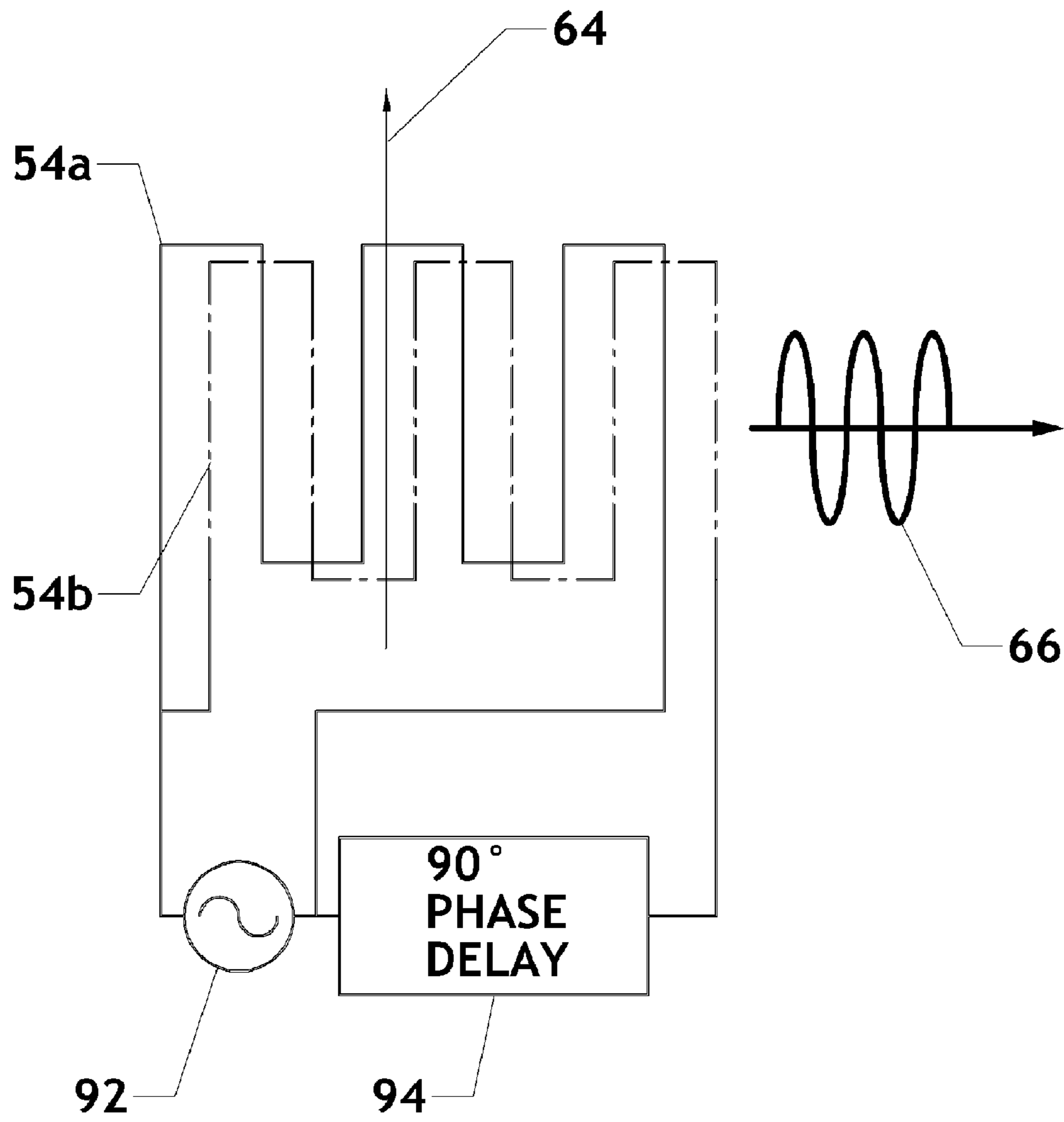


Figure 10

SPIRAL MAGNETIC FIELD APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PIPELINE INSPECTION

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/615,912 filed Nov. 10, 2009, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,923,994 which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/113,692 filed Nov. 12, 2008.

Both U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/615,912 and U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/113,692 are hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to pipeline inspection tools, and more particularly to apparatus and methods for data collection on an in-line inspection tool.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Oil, petroleum products, natural gas, hazardous liquids, water, and the like are often transported using pipelines. The majority of these pipelines are constructed from steel pipe. Once installed, a pipeline will inevitably corrode or otherwise degrade. Proper pipeline management requires identification, monitoring, and repair of defects and vulnerabilities of the pipeline. For example, information collected about the condition of a pipeline may be used to determine safe operating pressures, facilitate repair, schedule replacement, and the like.

Typical defects of a pipeline may include corrosion, gouges, dents, cracks, and the like. Corrosion may cause pitting, general wall loss, or cracking, thereby lowering the maximum operating pressure of the pipeline. Vulnerabilities may also include combined stress and chemical or biological action such as stress corrosion cracking. Without detection and preemptive action, all such defects and vulnerabilities may lead to pipeline failure.

Information on the condition of a pipeline is often collected using an in-line inspection (ILI) tool. Ferromagnetic pipelines can be inspected for defects, including cracks extending along the axis of a pipe, by a limited number of technologies. These technologies include magnetic flux leakage (MFL) inspection, ultrasonic (UT) inspection, eddy current inspection, and, in certain applications, inspection using electromagnetic acoustic transducers (EMATs).

EMAT inspection has failed to gain widespread use on in-line inspection tools. This failure has largely been the result of an inability to separate meaningful signal from the surrounding noise. Moreover, problems have arisen from the complex geometries involved. For example, building on the disclosures of Bobrov et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,100,809), Alers et al. (U.S. Publication No. 20090078048) disclose a device that projects a transverse shear, ultrasonic, guided wave, that wave is oriented at an angle of ten degrees to sixty degrees from the axis of the pipeline. However, when the wave strikes an axially oriented defect (e.g., an axially oriented crack), it does so at an oblique angle and is, consequently, reflected away from the transmitter at a mirror image angle. Thus, the proper location for a corresponding receiver cannot be determined with specificity, as it depends on the location of the defect with respect to the transmitter.

While some technologies are more adversely affected by the foregoing factors than are others, all such techniques may be improved with better signal detection, recognition, and

geometries. What is needed is a better device and method for the generation and reception of pulsed signals for the various inspection technologies.

SUMMARY

In contrast to conventional in-line inspection tools and to the device disclosed and advocated by Alers et al., selected embodiments in accordance with the present invention may include a magnetic field oriented obliquely with respect to both the axial and circumferential directions of the pipeline being inspected. While this oblique magnetic field may be described herein primarily in the context of EMAT technology, it is not limited in application to that technology. An oblique magnetic field in accordance with the present invention may be applied to other defect detection technologies, including magnetic flux leakage inspection.

In selected embodiments, a system in accordance with the present invention may include an EMAT traveling on an in-line inspection tool proximate an interior surface of a pipeline. The EMAT may generate a circumferentially directed, transverse shear wave in the wall of the pipeline. The wave may be guided in a circumferential direction around the pipeline between the interior and exterior surfaces of the pipe wall.

In certain embodiments, an EMAT may comprise a meander coil oriented with its long axis parallel to the axial direction of the pipeline. One or more magnets may generate a magnetic field about the coil. The magnetic field generated by the one or more magnets may be oriented with respect to the circumferential direction of the pipeline at an angle between zero degrees and ninety degrees.

When the angle between the circumferential direction of the pipeline and the magnetic field is between zero degrees and ninety degrees, and the long axis of the meander coil is parallel to the axial direction of the pipeline, only a circumferential, transverse, shear wave may be transmitted. The amplitude of the circumferential, transverse, shear wave may be increased when the magnetic field is oriented with respect to the circumferential direction of the pipe at an angle between ten and sixty degrees.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. Understanding that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are, therefore, not to be considered limiting of its scope, the invention will be described with additional specificity and detail through use of the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is an elevation view of one embodiment of an in-line inspection tool in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of one embodiment of an inspection assembly comprising an EMAT inspection device and linkages in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a plan view of adjacent inspection assemblies collectively producing an oblique or spiral magnetic field in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram illustrating a magnetostrictive EMAT inspection device positioned to produce a horizontal shear inspection wave guided circumferentially within the wall of the pipe being inspected in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a graph illustrating the relationship between a magnetic field orientation and signal amplitude;

FIG. 6 is a schematic diagram illustrating selected embodiments of elements of coils of an EMAT in-line inspection tool showing their positions relative to one another and to signals generated and/or received thereby in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 7 is an elevation view of one embodiment of a series of North-South dipole pairs positioned to produce a spiral magnetic field oblique to both the axial and circumferential directions of the pipeline in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 8 is an elevation view of an alternative embodiment of a series of North-South dipole pairs positioned to produce a spiral magnetic field oblique to both the axial and circumferential directions of the pipeline in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 9 is a schematic front view of another alternative embodiment of a series of North-South dipole pairs positioned to produce a spiral magnetic field oblique to both the axial and circumferential directions of the pipeline in accordance with the present invention; and

FIG. 10 is a schematic diagram illustrating a meander coil pair propagating a shear pulse in only one direction.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

It will be readily understood that the components of the present invention, as generally described and illustrated in the drawings herein, could be arranged and designed in a wide variety of different configurations. Thus, the following more detailed description of the embodiments of the system and method of the present invention, as represented in the drawings, is not intended to limit the scope of the invention as claimed, but is merely representative of various embodiments of the invention. The illustrated embodiments of the invention will be best understood by reference to the drawings, wherein like parts are designated by like numerals throughout.

Referring to FIG. 1, an in-line inspection tool 10 or vehicle 10 in accordance with the present invention may comprise various components including one or more inspection assemblies 12, canisters 14, driving cups 16, couplers 18, position sensors 20, and the like. Depending on the configuration of the in-line inspection tool 10 and the size of the pipeline to be inspected, the arrangement and number of components (e.g., the number of canisters 14) may vary.

Canisters 14 may house equipment such as one or more processors, memory devices, and batteries. The driving cups 16 may center the tool 10 within the pipeline and enable fluid traveling within a pipeline to engage the tool 10, thereby pushing the tool 10 through the pipeline. In selected embodiments, driving cups 16 may be formed of a somewhat flexible polyurethane or similar material. Couplers 18 may support bending of the tool 10, enabling the tool 10 to accommodate bends in the pipeline. Like the driving cups 16, in selected embodiments the couplers 18 may be formed of somewhat flexible polyurethane or similar material. Alternatively, couplers 18 may comprise a mechanical pivoting device.

An in-line inspection tool 10 may extend in a longitudinal direction 22 from a head end 24 to a tail end 26. The various components 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 of an in-line inspection tool 10 may be arranged in series. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, the head end 24 of a tool 10 may comprise a head section 28 comprising one or more driving cups 16. Following the head section 28 may be a primary sensor suite 30. A coupler 18a may extend to connect the head section 28 to the primary sensor suite 30.

In selected embodiments, an in-line inspection tool 10 in accordance with the present invention may include one or

more inspection assemblies 12 connected to an interior structure 38 (e.g., interior cylinder 38). Each inspection assembly 12 may include one or more magnets 32, signal sources, sensors, or combinations thereof positioned so as to travel along the interior of a pipe wall being inspected. Such signal sources and sensors may generate and receive a wide variety of signals oriented in any of many directions. While certain embodiments of the present invention may be discussed or illustrated in the context of an in-line inspection tool using EMAT technologies generating magnetostrictive stress waves, it should be understood that the concepts of the present invention are not limited to EMAT technologies. Concepts in accordance with the present invention (e.g., an oblique magnetic field) may be applied to other defect detection technologies, including magnetic flux leakage inspection, ultrasonic inspection, and eddy current inspection.

Following the primary sensor suite 30 may be a first canister 14a. In one embodiment, the first canister 14a may house the hardware providing the processing and memory devices for the in-line inspection tool 10. A coupler 18b may extend to connect the primary sensor suite 30 to the first canister 14a.

The first canister 14a may be followed by another driving cup 16. A coupler 18c may engage a first canister 14a and extend rearward to engage a second canister 14b. In one embodiment, the second canister 14b may house batteries providing the power for the in-line inspection tool 10. In selected embodiments, a driving cup 16 may connect to the second canister 14b. One or more position sensors 20 may then engage the second canister 14b, driving cup 16, or some combination thereof to form the tail end 26 of the in-line inspection tool 10. In one embodiment, the position sensors 20 may comprise one or more odometers 20 positioned to roll along the interior surface of the pipeline and measure the distance traveled by the in-line inspection tool 10.

Referring to FIG. 2, in selected embodiments, a primary sensor suite 30 may include inspection assemblies 12 having linkages, linkage movement, sensor housings, inter-sensor-housing movement, etc. disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/478,137 filed Jun. 4, 2009 and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/403,754 filed Mar. 13, 2009, both of which are hereby incorporated by reference. Similarly, embodiments in accordance with the present invention may utilize the pseudorandom binary sequence apparatus and method disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/538,104 filed Aug. 7, 2009, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

In certain embodiments, a primary sensor suite 30 may include inspection assemblies 12 distributed circumferentially (i.e., in a circumferential direction 63) about a central axis 40 of an in-line inspection tool 10. Each inspection assembly 12 may include a backbar 42 (e.g., armature 42) for supporting the various components of the inspection assembly 12. A linkage mount 44 may be positioned at each end of a backbar 42. Linkages 45 may engage an inspection assembly 12 via the linkage mounts 44 and extend therefrom to connect the inspection assembly 12 to an interior cylinder 38 forming the back bone of the primary sensor suite 30. Accordingly, inspection assemblies 12 may partially or fully encircle the interior cylinder.

In selected embodiments utilizing EMAT inspection, a backbar 42 may support one or more magnets 32. In certain embodiments, an inspection assembly 12 may include a magnet mount 46 providing an interface between a backbar 42 and a magnet 32. The magnet mount 46 may protect the magnet 32. The magnet mount 46 may also assist in transferring flux into the wall of the pipe being inspected.

In selected embodiments, a backbar 42 may support two magnets 32, one magnet 32 proximate each end thereof. For

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selected inspection assemblies **12**, a sensor mount **50** may secure to the backbar **42** at a location between the two magnets **32**. The sensor mount **50** may connect a sensor housing **52** to the backbar **42**.

A backbar **42** in accordance with the present invention may extend obliquely with respect to the central axis **40** of an in-line inspection tool **10**. Accordingly, to closely track the interior surface of the pipeline being inspected and to avoid unwanted interference with an underlying structure (e.g., cylinder) of the in-line inspection tool **10**, a backbar **42** may have an arced shape or configuration.

In selected embodiments, the arc formed by a backbar **42** may be smooth and continuous. In other embodiments, the arc formed by a backbar **42** may comprise multiple straight segments. For example, as shown in the illustrated embodiment, a backbar **42** may comprise a first straight segment **43a** proximate one end, a second straight segment **43b** proximate the middle of the backbar **42**, and a third straight segment **43c** proximate the other end.

In certain embodiments, in addition to an arced shape, a backbar **42** may include other features facilitating close tracking of the interior surface of the pipeline being inspected. For example, in selected embodiments, a backbar **42** may include one or more canting mechanisms **48**. A canting mechanism **48** may be formed as an integral or monolithic part of a backbar **42**. Alternatively, a canting mechanism **48** may be separable from the rest of a backbar **42**.

A canting mechanism **48** may form a base for securing a magnet **32**, magnet mount **46**, or a combination thereof to the rest of the backbar **42** or inspection assembly **12**. Accordingly, a canting mechanism **48** may tilt a corresponding magnet **32** or magnet mount **46** toward closer and better (e.g., better aligned) contact with the curved interior surface of the pipeline being inspected.

In selected embodiments, a backbar **42** may include two canting mechanisms. A first canting mechanism **48** may tilt a first magnet **32** one way while a second canting mechanism **48** may tilt a second magnet **32** an opposite way. Accordingly, both magnets **32** and corresponding magnet mounts **46** may be better aligned with the curved pipeline surface most proximate thereto.

A sensor mount **50** in accordance with the present invention may be formed of a flexible material and permit relative motion between a sensor housing **52** and a backbar **42**. Constraints such as the magnet mount **46** may be positioned proximate a sensor mount **50** to control or limit certain motion of the sensor mount **50** and sensor housing **52** with respect to the backbar **42**. In selected embodiments, a constraint **46** may prevent the sensor housing **52** from contacting or being crushed between a backbar **42** and the wall of the pipeline being inspected. Accordingly, a constraint **46** may provide an additional control over the motion of a sensor housing **52** with respect to a backbar **42**.

Inspection assemblies **12** may move with respect to the interior cylinder or main body of an in-line inspection tool **10**. For example, inspection assemblies **12** may move in a radial direction **56** with respect to the rest of an in-line inspection tool **10**. This freedom of motion may accommodate changes in the pipe being inspected. For example, features such as bends, constrictions, changes in the thickness of the wall of the pipe, circumferential welds, dents, and damaged pipe walls may all affect the interior diameter of a pipeline. Movement of an inspection assembly **12** may permit sensor housings **52** to closely track the interior surface of a pipeline in spite of changes in the interior diameter thereof.

In embodiments utilizing magnetostrictive EMAT inspection, magnets **32** may induce a magnetic flux field in the wall

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of the pipe being inspected. One or more coils **54** (e.g., meander coils **54**) housed within or on a sensor housing **52** may generate, receive, or both generate and receive magnetostrictive stress waves. Such waves may support detection of anomalies within the wall of the pipe being inspected.

Referring to FIG. 3, in certain embodiments, two magnets **32** forming a magnetic dipole pair may be positioned at opposite ends of a backbar **42** so that the distance **34** between poles of the dipole pair is less than the distance **36** between poles of opposite polarity in adjacent inspection assemblies **12**. Accordingly, the shortest magnetic flux path in the pipe wall between any poles of opposite polarity may lie parallel to the backbars **42** of the inspection assemblies **12**. In such embodiments, the magnetic field may be constrained to the spiral direction of the dipole pair, oblique to both the axial and circumference directions of the pipeline being inspected.

In general, any configuration in which dimension **34** is less than dimension **36** may produce a spiral or oblique magnetic field in accordance with the present invention. In selected embodiments, the placement of adjacent inspection assemblies **12** may be such that the poles of a given polarity (i.e., either North or South) lie in a spiral that is orthogonal to the axis of the inspection assembly **12**. In such a configuration, the direction of the spiral comprising the North or the South poles of the magnetic dipoles will be, at all points therealong, orthogonal to the spiral of the magnetic field generated.

In selected embodiments of the configuration discussed above, continuous poles, rather than the discrete poles **32** of FIG. 2, may be used to generate the spiral or oblique magnetic field in accordance with the present invention. Continuous poles may be configured in any suitable manner. For example, in certain embodiments, continuous poles may comprise brush contacts extending from magnets **32** radially outward to the interior surface of the pipeline being inspected.

In such embodiments, the magnets **32** and the brush contacts may be mounted on moveable backbars **42** or on a substantially rigid structure (e.g., cylinder **38**) forming part of the frame or backbone of the in-line inspection tool **10**. When so configured, the continuous poles will produce polarity that is orthogonal to the line of the poles. When the line of the continuous poles lies in a spiral direction, the desired spiral or oblique magnetic field will be produced in the orthogonal direction, oblique to both the axial and circumferential directions of the pipeline. Such a configuration will always satisfy the required relationship between dimensions **34** and **36** and the dimension **36** will have no practical meaning. A spiral magnetic field produced by continuous poles may be used as the magnetic field for EMAT applications as illustrated herein or for any other compatible defect detection system or technology.

Referring to FIG. 4, a magnetic field **64** may be introduced by the magnets **32** of the inspection assembly **12** into the wall of a pipe segment **60** or pipeline **60** being inspected. The magnets **32** may be permanent magnets or electromagnets. The magnets **32** may be oriented such that the magnetic field **64** is oblique to both the axial direction **62** and circumferential direction **63** defined by the pipe **60**. In selected embodiments, the angle **68** between the circumferential direction **63** and the magnetic bias field **64** may have a value of zero to ninety degrees.

In certain embodiments, in addition to one or more magnets **32**, an inspection assembly **12** may include a magnetostrictive EMAT. An EMAT may comprise a transmitting coil **54** (e.g., a meander coil **54**) oriented with its long axis parallel to the axial direction **62**. When the transmitting coil **54** is activated (e.g., by an alternating current pulse), a magnetostrictive force may generate an ultrasonic guided transverse

shear wave 66 within the wall of the pipe 60. The wave 66 may be directed in the circumferential direction 63, perpendicular to the axis of the coil 54. In certain embodiments, to maximize the strength of this wave 66, the angle 68 between the circumferential direction 63 and the magnetic bias field 64 may have a value of ten to sixty degrees.

Referring to FIG. 5, the strength of a wave 66 may vary with the angle 68 between the circumferential direction 63 and the magnetic bias field 64. When the angle 68 is ninety degrees, the bias field 64 and the long axis of the meander coil 54 are both parallel to the axial direction 62 of a pipe 60. In such a configuration, only a circumferential transverse shear wave 66 is transmitted. However, the strength of the wave 66 is not at its maximum.

As illustrated on the graph of FIG. 5, the amplitude of the circumferential transverse shear wave 66 may be increased by orienting the magnetic field 64 relative to the coil 52 so that the angle 68 has a value of about ten to about sixty degrees. In selected embodiments, the amplitude of the circumferential transverse shear wave 66 may be further increased by orienting the magnetic field 64 relative to the coil 54 so that the angle 68 has a value of about twenty to about fifty degrees. In still other embodiments, the amplitude of the circumferential transverse shear wave 66 may be further increased by orienting the magnetic field 64 relative to the coil 52 so that the angle 68 has a value of about thirty to about forty degrees.

When the magnitude of a circumferential horizontal shear wave 66 is increased via the angle 68 between the circumferential direction 63 and the magnetic field 64, waves other than the horizontal shear wave 66 may be emitted. These other waves may themselves be used for pipeline inspection. Alternatively, they may be removed by frequency filtering, time gating, or other digital signal processing consistent with the nature of the initiating pulse.

Referring to FIG. 6, once produced, a horizontal shear wave 66 may be guided by the surfaces of the pipe wall to travel around the circumference of the pipe 60. In so doing, the wave 66 may encounter an obstruction such as a defect 76 in the pipe wall. A defect 76 may produce a reflected pulse 70 that can be received at or near the location of the transmitting coil 54 in a pulse-echo mode. A defect 76 may also alter the portion 72 of the wave 66 that passes the defect 76.

The altered wave 72 may be received by a receiving coil 74 located past the defect 76 in a pitch-catch mode. This receiving coil 74 may be located anywhere up to three hundred sixty degrees around the pipe 60 in the circumferential direction 63 (e.g., to the point where it would overlay the transmitting coil 54). In selected embodiments, at three hundred sixty degrees, the receiving coil 74 may comprise the transmitting coil 54 in a non-transmitting mode. The receiving coil 74 may even be slightly more than three hundred sixty degrees around the circumference of the pipe 60. Accordingly, the entire circumference of the pipe 60 may be inspected by one or more such devices 54, 74.

Embodiments in accordance with the present invention may include any suitable combination of transmitter and receiver including, without limitation, a transmitting coil 54 used as both a transmitter and receiver in a pulse-echo mode; a transmitting coil 54 with a separate, comparable receiving coil 74a placed within the magnetic field 64 or in a similar magnetic field slightly ahead of the transmitting coil 54 in a pulse-echo mode; a transmitting coil 54 with a comparable receiving coil 74 in a comparable magnetic field placed beyond the location of potential axially oriented defects 76 as a receiver in a pitch-catch mode; a transmitting coil 54 used as a transmitter and receiver in a pitch-catch mode for guided waves traveling three hundred sixty degrees completely

around the circumference of the pipe; or a transmitting coil 54 with a separate comparable receiving coil 74a placed within the magnetic field 64 or in a similar magnetic field slightly removed from the transmitting coil 54 in a pitch-catch mode for guided waves 66 traveling just under or just over three hundred sixty degrees around the circumference of the pipe 66.

Referring to FIG. 7, in selected embodiments in accordance with the present invention, multiple inspection assemblies 12 may be placed side-by-side in a single continuous spiral. Positioned in this way, the magnets 32 of the various assemblies 12 may strengthen the magnitude of the overall magnetic field. They may do this by limiting lateral spread of the magnetic field orthogonal to the North-South axis thereof.

In certain embodiments, multiple meander coils 54 may be placed in the several magnetic fields 64 to increase inspection coverage of the pipe wall via the multiple shear waves 66 they produce. For example, coils 54 may be placed in every North-South magnetic dipole (e.g., in every inspection assembly 12). Alternatively, coils 54 may be placed in alternating dipoles or in any succession of dipoles that may be selected. Coils 54 may then be used as both transmitters and receivers for a full three hundred sixty degree examination of a section of the pipeline 60. Multiple sections and periodic pulsing of the coils 54 at each section may ensure thorough examination of the pipe wall.

Referring to FIG. 8, in selected embodiments in accordance with the present invention, multiple inspection assemblies 12 may be placed side-by-side in two continuous spirals spaced one hundred eighty degrees apart around the circumference of an in-line inspection tool 10 or section thereof. In this configuration, one meander coil 54 may be placed as a transmitter in a North-South dipole field (e.g., in a first inspection assembly 12), while another meander coil 54 may be placed as a receiver in the corresponding, opposite North-South dipole field (e.g., in a second inspection assembly 12) spaced one hundred eighty degrees therefrom. Other transmitter and receiver pairs may be placed in this or some other manner to increase inspection coverage.

Referring to FIG. 9, in still other embodiments in accordance with the present invention, multiple inspection assemblies 12 may be placed side-by-side in three continuous spirals spaced one hundred twenty degrees apart around the circumference of an in-line inspection tool 10 or section thereof. In this configuration, meander coils 54 may be placed (e.g., within inspection assemblies 12) as desired or necessary.

Still other configurations may comprise more coaxial spirals to reduce the circumferential spacing between transmitter and receiver coils. Each North-South dipole magnetic field may have an axial and a circumferential component that may be used separately or together for the inspection of pipeline using inspection technologies other than EMAT.

Referring to FIG. 10, an EMAT in accordance with the present invention may generate both a forward moving wave 66 and a backward moving wave separated one hundred eighty degrees from one another. In selected embodiments, a backward traveling wave may be eliminated. For example, an EMAT may comprise two meander coils 54a, 54b. One meander coil 54b may be placed forward of the other meander coil 54a in the direction of the transmitted transverse shear wave 66 by one-half the distance between coil elements. The forward meander coil 54b may be activated by an alternating current pulse 92 identical to the pulse activating the other meander coil 54a, but phase delayed 94 by ninety degrees. The magnetostrictive forces that create transverse shear waves 66 from the two meander coils 54a, 54b may add to

each other in one direction and cancel each other in the opposite direction. Accordingly, they may produce a transverse shear wave **66** in one direction only.

The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative, and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims, rather than by the foregoing description. All changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

What is claimed and desired to be secured by United States Letters Patent is:

1. A pipeline inspection method comprising:
 - identifying a pipeline defining a circumferential direction and an axial direction and containing an in-line inspection tool comprising
 - a first end,
 - a second end opposite the first end, and
 - a primary sensor section positioned between the first and second ends, the primary sensor section comprising at least one magnet and at least one sensor, the at least one magnet producing a first magnetic field having an orientation, the orientation being directed obliquely with respect to each of the circumferential and axial directions and pointed more toward the first end than toward the second end;
 - producing relative motion between the at least one magnet and the pipeline, the relative motion comprising substantially exclusively translation in the axial direction of the at least one magnet with respect to the pipeline;
 - generating, by the in-line inspection tool during the producing, one or more oblique magnetic fields each having the orientation, the one or more oblique magnetic fields comprising the first magnetic field and all other magnetic fields that emanate from the in-line inspection tool and are oriented obliquely with respect to each of the circumferential and axial directions; and
 - collecting, by the at least one sensor during the generating, data characterizing one or more physical characteristics of the pipeline.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the producing comprises producing, by a fluid traveling within the pipeline, relative motion between the at least one magnet and the pipeline.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the magnetic field is oriented with respect to the circumferential direction at an angle between ten and sixty degrees.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the primary sensor section further comprises a transmitter positioned between two opposite magnetic poles generated by the least one magnet.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the transmitter cooperates with the two opposite magnetic poles to form an electromagnetic acoustic transducer.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the generating comprises generating, by the electromagnetic acoustic transducer, a transverse shear wave traveling in the circumferential direction within a wall of the pipeline.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the collecting comprises receiving, by the at least one sensor, the transverse shear wave from the wall.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein:
 - the at least one sensor comprises the first transmitter in a non-transmitting mode;
 - the first end of the in-line inspection tool comprises one of a leading end and a trailing end; and

the second end of the in-line inspection tool comprises the other of the leading end and the trailing end.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the primary sensor section further comprises:
 - a frame extending in the axial direction; and
 - an armature independently suspended from the frame.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein:
 - the armature supports two magnets of the at least one magnet spaced apart a distance to form the two opposite magnetic poles; and
 - the armature supports the transmitter between the two magnets.
11. A pipeline inspection method comprising:
 - identifying a pipeline defining a circumferential direction and an axial direction and containing an in-line inspection tool comprising
 - a first end,
 - a second end opposite the first end, and
 - a primary sensor section, the primary sensor section comprising a magnet dipole and at least one sensor, the magnet dipole producing a first magnetic field having an orientation, the orientation being directed obliquely with respect to each of the circumferential and axial directions and pointed more toward the first end than toward the second end;
 - producing relative motion between the magnet dipole and the pipeline, the relative motion comprising substantially exclusively translation in the axial direction of the magnet dipole with respect to the pipeline;
 - generating, by in-line inspection tool during the producing, one or more oblique magnetic fields each having the orientation, the one or more oblique magnetic fields comprising the first magnetic field and all other magnetic fields that emanate from the in-line inspection tool and are oriented obliquely with respect to each of the circumferential and axial directions; and
 - collecting, by the at least one sensor during the generating, data characterizing one or more physical characteristics of the pipeline.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein the primary sensor section further comprises a frame extending in the axial direction.
13. The method of claim 12, wherein the primary sensor section further comprises a plurality of armatures, each being independently suspended from the frame and comprising a first end and a second end, opposite the first end.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein the primary sensor section further comprises a plurality of first magnets, each connected to the first end of a different armature of the plurality of armatures to form a first pole.
15. The method of claim 14, wherein the primary sensor section further comprises a plurality of second magnets, each connected to the second end of a different armature of the plurality of armatures to form a second, opposite pole.
16. The method of claim 15, wherein a distance between the first and second poles corresponding to a first armature of the plurality of armatures is less than a distance between the first pole corresponding to the first armature and the second pole corresponding to an adjacent armature of the plurality of armatures.
17. The method of claim 16, wherein the first and second magnets corresponding to each armature of the plurality of armatures generate a magnetic field orientated obliquely with respect to the circumferential direction.
18. The method of claim 17, wherein:
 - the plurality of armatures are distributed spirally with respect to the frame;

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the first end of the in-line inspection tool comprises one of a leading end and a trailing end; and the second end of the in-line inspection tool comprises the other of the leading end and the trailing end.

19. A pipeline inspection method comprising:
 5 identifying a pipeline defining a circumferential direction and an axial direction and containing an in-line inspection tool comprising
 a first end,
 a second end opposite the first end, and
 10 a primary sensor section, the primary sensor section comprising a substantially rigid frame, at least two continuous magnetic poles spiraling about the substantially rigid frame, and at least one sensor, the at least two continuous magnetic poles producing a first magnetic field having an orientation, the orientation
 15 being directed obliquely with respect to each of the circumferential and axial directions and pointed more toward the first end than toward the second end;
 producing relative motion between the at least two continuous magnetic poles and the pipeline, the relative

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motion comprising substantially exclusively translation in the axial direction of the at least two continuous magnetic poles with respect to the pipeline;
 generating, by the in-line inspection tool during the producing, one or more oblique magnetic fields each having the orientation, the one or more oblique magnetic fields comprising the first magnetic field and all other magnetic fields that emanate from the in-line inspection tool and are oriented obliquely with respect to each of the circumferential and axial directions; and
 10 collecting, by the at least one sensor during the generating, data characterizing one or more physical characteristics of the pipeline.

20. The method of claim **19**, wherein the primary sensor
 15 section further comprises at least one brush contact extending radially outward from each continuous magnetic pole of the at least two continuous magnetic poles.

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